GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1031
ANSWERED ON:10.07.2009
COMPUTERISATION OF PANCHAYATS
Adhalrao Patil Shri Shivaji

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Expert Group on Information Technology Progammes in one of its recommendations had recommended computerization of 2.5 lakh Panchayats;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken by the Union Government thereon;

(d) the number of Panchayats computerized so far and the expenditure incurred thereon;

(e) the expenditure likely to be incurred on computerization of 2.5 lakh Panchayats; and

(f) the manner in which the funds are likely to be mobilized in the regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (Dr.C. P. JOSHI)

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir, Keeping in view the strategic importance of computerization at the Gram Panchayat level, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) had constituted an Expert Group in June 2007 under the Chairmanship of Director General, National Informatics Centre to assess the current and future Information Technology (IT) programmes of the Ministry, to recommend on the most cost-effective technologies for reaching IT to the Gram Panchayats, the use of IT for effectively building capacities of Panchayati Raj Institutions through distance learning; and the cost implications of the recommendations. The Expert Group submitted its Report on 17.01.2008. The major recommendations of the group are:-

Given the varied levels of functional devolution to Panchayats and availability of associated infrastructure in various States, the Group has recommended that project should have two or more categories of Panchayats (high, medium and low) based on their overall preparedness and work out different plans for each of the categories.

The Group has recommended provision of computers and other associated infrastructure to Gram Panchayats and Block Panchayats. Since Zilla Panchayats have fairly good hardware infrastructure, MoPR need not invest in the provision of hardware of ZPs.

The Expert Group has recommended open technology which includes open standards, open source and other similar open initiatives have been recommended as the basis for technology options as such a choice would result in low cost, freedom from vendor lock-in and transparent interoperability standards.

Taking cognizance of the variation in the functioning of Panchayats across the States, the Group has accorded due autonomy to States in defining and developing their own application software to address State specific functionalities while at the same time recommending the development of certain core common functions centrally to ensure interoperability, speedier and implementation of the project.

The group also recommended the adoption of multi-mode training interventions using ICTS and satellite-based technologies.

(c), (e) & (f): Based on the recommendations of the Expert Group, Ministry of Panchayati Raj is in the process of finalizing the scheme for e-governance in PRIs. Preliminary work namely, Information and Service Needs Assessment, Business Process Re-engineering and preparation of Detailed Project report has been initiated.

(d): As per the information given by the states, the number of Block and Village Panchayats computerized so far is given in Annexure-1. Under the erstwhile Information and Technology component of the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojana(RGSY), states were given grants for computerization of Panchayats, details of which are in Annexure- 2. This scheme has, since 2007-08 been substituted by the Mission Project on e-Panchayats which is an approved Mission Mode Project under the National e-governance Plan.